UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Applied Ethics

Code: 100286
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Philosophy	OT	3
Philosophy	OT	4

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

Students are strongly advised to have a basic conceptual knowledge of ethics as well as of the main historical ethical currents.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The aim of this course is to address key questions of applied ethics, on which there is no fixed consensus, and are part of the current debates in our contemporary societies. For example: What responsibility do we have for climate change? What moral status should animals and nature have? Is animal experimentation ethically correct? What are the ethical implications of biotechnology for human enhancement? When is there a right to die? And a duty to help people to die? What do we owe to future generations?

As individuals, we should decide what we think is right and how to act on it. As members of a society, we should collectively determine what practices are right; what we should tolerate and what we should change.

Students will be introduced to a set of central themes, thinkers, and case studies of applied ethics. They will be provided with the skills to decipher ethical questions, delve into paradigmatic concepts of the discipline of ethics and learn methodological guidelines for the resolution of moral dilemmas. Students will be able to analyse concrete cases of applied ethics, construct philosophical arguments and defend different ethical positions, appreciating the practical and social usefulness of ethics; bringing into play their own way of thinking and valuing.

Competences

Philosophy
- Analysing and summarising the main arguments of fundamental texts of philosophy in its various disciplines.
- Applying the knowledge of ethics to the moral problems of society, and assessing the implications about the human condition of changes in the world of contemporary techniques.
- Recognising and interpreting topics and problems of philosophy in its various disciplines.

- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Ability to maintain an appropriate conversation.
2. Accurately using the specific lexicon of science history.
3. Analysing and summarising information.
4. Assessing a concrete ethical position, in the context of the current world's problems.
5. Assessing the legitimacy of the thesis defended by participants of the most important contemporary controversies.
6. Carrying out a planning for the development of a subject-related work.
7. Carrying out oral presentations using an appropriate academic vocabulary and style.
8. Communicating in the studied language in oral and written form, properly using vocabulary and grammar.
9. Correctly, accurately and clearly communicating the acquired philosophical knowledge in oral and written form.
10. Correctly drawing up a previously analysed non-regulatory text.
11. Developing self-learning strategies.
12. Discriminating the features that define the writer's place in the context of a problem and reorganising them in a consistent diagram.
13. Distinguishing and outlining the fundamental content of a philosophical text.
14. Effectively communicating and applying the argumentative and textual processes to formal and scientific texts.
15. Establishing relationships between science, philosophy, art, religion, politics, etc.
16. Explaining aspects of the history of science by using the discipline's specific terminology.
17. Leading working groups, overseeing collective tasks and working with commitment in order to bring together various positions.
18. Producing an individual work that specifies the work plan and timing of activities.
19. Recognising and implementing the following teamwork skills: commitment to teamwork, habit of cooperation, ability to participate in the problem solving processes.
20. Recognising, with a critical eye, philosophical referents of the past and present and assessing its importance.
21. Reflecting on their own work and the immediate environment's in order to continuously improve it.
22. Relating elements and factors involved in the development of scientific processes.
23. Rigorously building ethical arguments, and defending and distinguishing them from the incorrect ones.
24. Summarising the main arguments of the great contemporary texts of ethics and political philosophy.
25. Using suitable terminology when drawing up an academic text.

Content

The following outlines a number of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions may differ from this basic outline acording to the learning needs and in a common consensus with the students. A more detailed programme will be announced at the beginning of the course.

1. Introduction: What is applied ethics?

2. What is the 'good' life? What is 'good' dying? Ageing, euthanasia and death with dignity

3. Ethics of the market: living beings and the commodification of bodies

4. Transhumanism, genetic design and human enhancement technologies

5. The moral status of non-human animals: scientific experimentation, genetic manipulation and exploitation

6. Ecological ethics, the climate crisis and future generations

7. Sex and the pornification of culture

8. The morality of war

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	47	1.88	23, 12, 13, 15, 25, 5, 4, 20, 22, 24
Seminars	12	0.48	3, 9, 23, 11, 18, 15, 6, 14, 7, 25, 5, 4, 17, 19, 10, 22
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	23	0.92	3, 9, 13, 18, 6, 14, 7, 25, 17, 20, 19, 10
Type: Autonomous			
Learning/work	45.5	1.82	3, 9, 23, 11, 12, 13, 18, 15, 6, 25, 5, 4, 20, 10, 22, 24
Readings	15	0.6	3, 23, 11, 12, 13, 18, 6, 5, 4, 17, 20, 22, 24

This subject adopts the seminar format and comprises theoretical explanations, classes with practical activities and tutorials.

The methodology consists of:

- Study of the main theoretical frameworks and problems of applied ethics

- Commentary on texts and audiovisual material

- Group critical debate on practical cases

- Personal work of the student

- Group work

- Seminar conduction

- Lectures by experts

- Supervision of individual work

As far as the theoretical part is concerned, the teacher will raise the issues and problems that the students should know in order to achieve the objectives and competences of the subject. The practical part will be

devoted to the students conducting the seminar, who will present the readings (previously read at home) and their problematic issues, giving rise to a critical analysis and debate with the whole class. As far as possible, the participation of experts on the subjects dealt with will be delivered.

It is strongly recommended that students keep up to date with the subject and the reading of texts, as well as the preparation of practical activities and make use of tutorials.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Essay/written text	40%	3	0.12	3, 9, 23, 11, 12, 13, 15, 6, 16, 14, 8, 25, 5, 4, 20, 10, 22, 24, 2
Participation and conducting a seminar	30%	3	0.12	3, 9, 23, 11, 12, 13, 15, 6, 16, 14, 8, 25, 5, 4, 20, 10, 22, 24, 2
Practical test	30%	1.5	0.06	3, 9, 23, 11, 12, 13, 18, 15, 14, 8, 7, 25, 5, 4, 17, 1, 20, 19, 10, 21, 22, 24

Continuous assessment:

In order to assess the different competences and knowledge that students have acquired throughout the course as well as their different skills, three assessment activities will be carried out.

1. Class participation and conducting the seminar - 30%: not retaken. Students must read the assigned readings at home beforehand and will lead the seminar and discussion in class. A critical debate will be generated from the concepts and readings studied and will be taken into account in the evaluation activity.

2. Essay/ Written text - 40%: a written text will be presented following the teacher's guidelines with a markedly practical and applied character. The students must obligatorily arrange a tutorial with the teacher to show a script of the text with the bibliography used.

3. Practical exam - 30%

The single assessment (avaluació única) will consist of:

a. Written test (70%):

- Questions of a theoretical nature on the contents of the subject (50%).

- Questions on specific readings for the single assessment (20%)

b. Submission and defence of a research paper (30%): the essay will deal with one of the topics of the subject previously agreed with the teacher. It will be compulsory to have a tutorial with the teacher to explain the topic of the work, the script and the bibliography used. The deadline for submission is two days before the exam.

On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students (on Moodle) of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

In order to participate in the retaken, students must have been previously assessed in a set of activities, the weight of whichis equivalent to a minimum of 2/3 of the total grade (CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT) or they must submit all the assessment activities foreseen (SINGLE ASSESSMENT). At the single assessment, the same assessment method as continuous assement will be used for the retaken.

Students will obtain a Not assessed/Not submitted course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items.

NOTE:

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

This subject allows the use of AI technologies exclusively for support tasks such as bibliographic searches, text correction or translations. Other specific situations may be contemplated, as deemed appropriate by the teacher. The student must clearly (i) identify which parts have been generated using AI technology; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and final outcome of the activity. Lack of transparency regarding the use of AI in the assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade may be lowered, or the work may even be awarded a zero. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Those activities that will show irregularities (plagiarims, incorrect use of Ia,...) are not susceptible to retake.

The Department of Philosophy agreed that the first-semester students would have two periods dedicated to assessment activities and one week during which students could specifically prepare for the exams, in the format that each instructor will specify at the beginning of the course. The datesfor the review week and the assessment periods are:

- October 27 - October 31: review or tutorial week
- November 3 - November 7: assessment week
- January 8, 9, 12, 13, 14: assessment week

The modality usedin the week previous to the assessment week will be individual and colective tutorials.

Bibliography

An extended, subject-specific bibliography will be provided at the beginning of the course.

- Bostrom, Nick y Savulescu, Julian. (2009). *Mejoramiento humano*, TEELL, 2017
- Diéguez, Antonio. (2016). *Transhumanismo. La búsqueda tecnológica del mejoramiento humano*, Herder
- Gardiner, Stephen M., and Allen Thompson (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199941339.001.0001
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- Gómez Franco, Irene. (2020). *Deudas pendientes. La justicia entre generaciones.* Plaza y Valdés-CSIC
- Jamieson, Dale. (2014). *Reason in a Dark Time. Why the struggle against climate change falled-and what it means for our future.* Oxford University Press
- LaFollete, Hugh. (2005). *The Oxford Handbook of Practical Ethics*, Oxford University Press
- Lara, Francisco y Savulescu, Julian. (2021). *Más (que) humanos. Biotecnología, inteligencia artificial y ética de la mejora*. Tecnos
- Marx, Karl. (1867). *El capital.* Alianza editorial (2010)
- Parfit, Derek. (2005). *Razones y personas.* Machado Libros
- Roser, Dominic. (2017). *Climate Justice.* Routledge.

- Savulescu, Julian. (2012). *¿Decisiones peligrosas? Una bioética desafiante*. Tecnos
- Shafer-Landau, Russ. (2012). *The fundamentals of ethics*. Oxford University Press
- Singer, Peter (ed.). (1995). *Compendio de Ética*. Alianza
- Singer Peter. (2022). *Liberación animal*. Trotta [traducción de *Animal Liberation: A New Ethic for Our Treatment of Animals*]

Software

None

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed